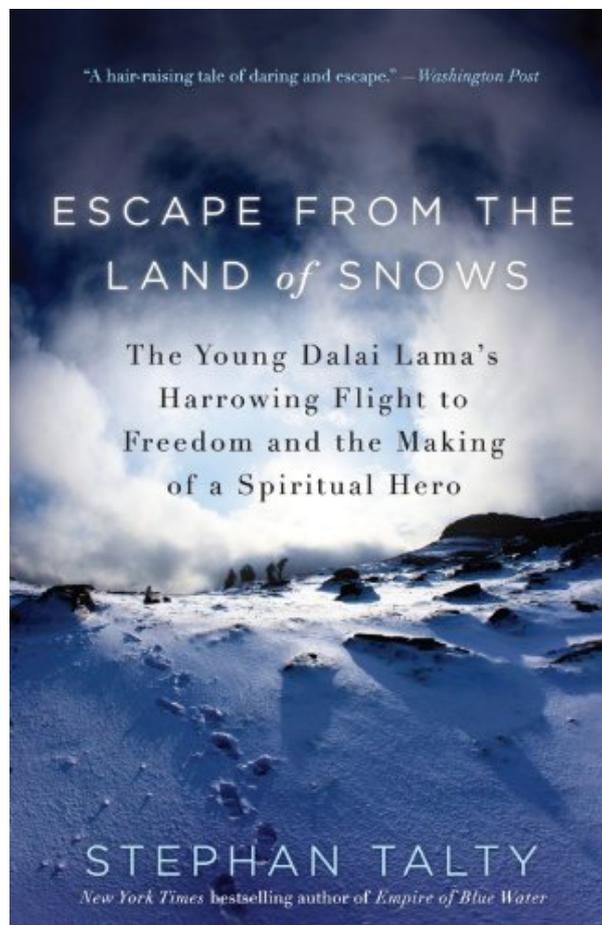
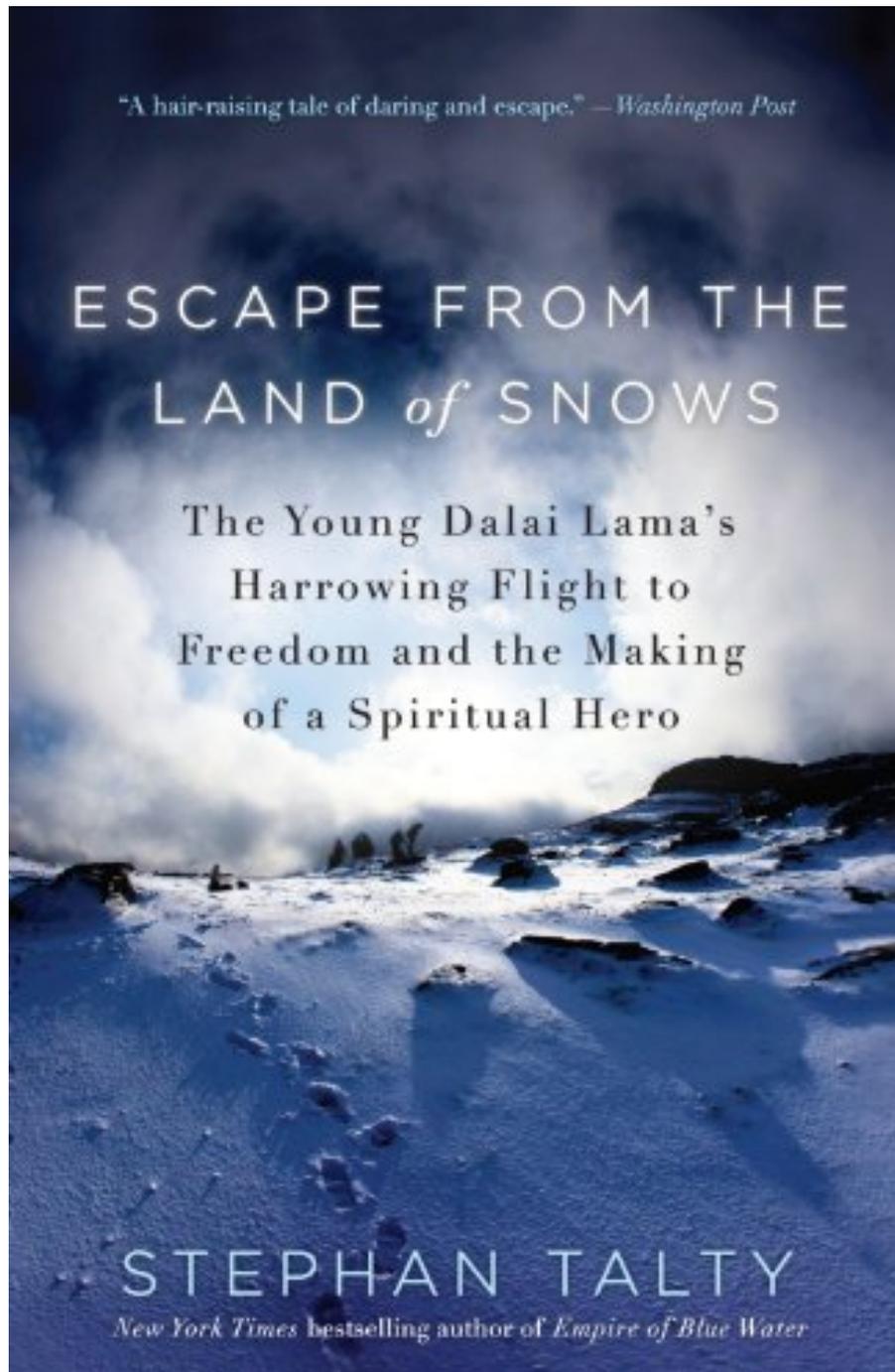


**ESCAPE FROM THE LAND OF SNOWS: THE
YOUNG DALAI LAMA'S HARROWING
FLIGHT TO FREEDOM AND THE MAKING
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"A hair-raising tale of daring and escape." —*Washington Post*

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The Young Dalai Lama's
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of a Spiritual Hero

STEPHAN TALTY

New York Times bestselling author of *Empire of Blue Water*

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On the evening of March 17, 1959, as the people of Tibet braced for a violent power grab by Chinese occupiers—one that would forever wipe out any vestige of national sovereignty—the twenty-four-year-old Dalai Lama, Tibet's political and spiritual leader, contemplated the impossible. The task before him was immense: to slip past a cordon of crack Chinese troops ringing his summer palace and, with an escort of 300, journey across the highest terrain in the world and over treacherous Himalayan passes to freedom—one step ahead of pursuing Chinese soldiers.

Mao Zedung, China's ruthless Communist dictator, had pinned his hopes for total Tibetan submission on controlling the impressionable Dalai Lama. So beloved was the young ruler—so identified with his country's essence—that for him to escape might mean perpetual resistance from a population unwilling to tolerate an increasingly brutal occupation. The Dalai Lama's minders sent word to the Tibetan rebels and CIA-trained guerrillas who waited on the route: His Holiness must escape—at all costs.

In many ways, the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, was unprepared for the epic journey awaiting him. Twenty-two years earlier, government search parties, guided by prophecies and omens, had arrived at the boy's humble peasant home and subjected the two-year-old to a series of tests. After being declared the reincarnation of Tibet's previous ruler, the boy was brought to Lhasa to learn the secrets of Buddhism and the ways of ultimate power. Forced in the ensuing two decades to cope with aching loneliness and often stifling ritual—and compelled to suppress his mischievous personality—Gyatso eventually proved himself a capable leader. But no previous Dalai Lama had ever taken on a million Communist Chinese soldiers bent on stamping out Tibetan freedom.

To keep his country's dream of independence alive by means of a government in exile, the young ruler would not only have to brave battalions of enemy soldiers and the whiteout conditions waiting on the slopes of the Himalayas' highest peaks, he'd have to overcome a different type of blindness: the naïveté intrinsic to his sheltered palace life and his position as leader of a people who considered violence deeply taboo.

His mind made up, the young Dalai Lama set off on his audacious journey to India while behind him a Chinese army rolled over Lhasa, its advance hunter patrols in fierce pursuit of the man they most coveted. The 14th's escape was an act of daring and defiance that represented Tibet's last hope, and so the world watched, transfixed, as the gentle monk's journey unfolded.

Emotionally powerful and irresistibly page-turning, *Escape from the Land of Snows* is simultaneously a portrait of the inhabitants of a spiritual nation forced to take up arms in defense of their ideals, and the saga of an initially childlike ruler who at first wore his monk's robes uncomfortably but was ultimately transformed by his escape into the towering figure the world knows today—a charismatic champion of free thinking and universal compassion.

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Features

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Nice to understand the events leading up to the release ...

By Jennifer A. Paris

Nice to understand the events leading up to the release of Tibetan Buddhism in the world. Writing is okay, but not great. Still, once it got going, it held my interest.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Exciting read - hard to put the book down

By Bruce B.

This book will keep you interested from beginning to end. The story is captivating in respects to imminent danger lurking around every turn as His Holiness the Dalai Lama seeks to flee to India. You literally sense the fear and anger of the Tibetans and they face the Chinese invaders. You feel the courage displayed in the hearts of those Tibetans who are now forcefully reduced to that of a "lesser" human being by the Chinese as they rise up to challenge their oppressors only to be beat down or worse.

As well written as this book is, the need for citations would have been a very welcomed addition to the book. It reads more like a novel than it does a historical account of events which is a different approach than I am used to. However, the need to cite the sources formally should have been done to preserve authenticity of the the work.

8 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Should Be Regarded as Historical Fiction

By Dr. Jan B. Newman

This is a long awaited book that appears to have had a large amount of research behind it with no attempt at fact checking or attempt for internal consistency. It is written as an as an adventure saga weaving together sources and accounts of what happened when the Chinese communists overran Tibet and the Dalai Lama escaped into India and a few events thereafter. Much is written as first person recall by "witnesses."

Tibet was a peaceful country that excluded outsiders after the attempted British invasion and was backward, semi-feudal in nature with significant inequities, and sectarianism, but was peaceful and most people despite living a very hard life were happy. It was complacency and ineptitude more than anything else that prevented them from keeping the Chinese out or turning them back during the initial invasion. The final nail in Tibet's casket was its guerilla fighters being abandoned by the CIA after Nixon decided trade with China was more important than human rights and Tibet. Nepal sided with the Chinese to avoid invasion by the Chinese, and India didn't want to anger its militant neighbor by supporting the Tibetan cause, which would prove to be to its own detriment.

Some things are just purely erroneous such as stating Mongolia was under Communist Chinese rule.(Mongolia is autonomous and was previously under Soviet influence. Stalin destroyed the majority on Monasteries in Mongolia which also was a Buddhist country.), Grossly understating the population of Preinvasion Tibet-using a figure of 2 million when it was 6 million plus, underestimating the casualties and the destruction by the Chinese . Over 1 million Tibetans killed and 99.9 % of Tibetan monasteries ransacked, plundered and destroyed in China's attempts to destroy both the people of Tibet and their culture.

Large amount of this book were lifted straight out of *In Exile from the Land of Snows: The Definitive Account of the Dalai Lama and Tibet Since the Chinese Conquest* by Avedon. (They were credited) He even adopted Avedon's writing style. Because the book is so well credited, one could readily accept this book as truth, but clearly there are embellishments and significant errors.

Some things are superfluous to the story and not representative of the Tibetan culture preinvasion but appear to be added for sensationalism such as depicting monasteries as seats of debauchery.

Every book should have a purpose. I am not sure what the purpose of this book is. Perhaps to bring the plight of Tibet to the average reader. The most enlightening part of the book is Talky's description of his own trip to Tibet.

The interested reader should use this book as a starting point, but should read more primary sources and not take this as gospel truth. I will append some of those sources at a later time.

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